

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 have been examined. Applicant is adding new claims 5-8. No new matter has been introduced and support for the new claims can be found in the specification.

Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings for allegedly failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5). In particular, the Examiner alleges that Figure 6 includes reference number 14, which is not mentioned in the description.

Applicant respectfully notes that Figure 6 does not contain a reference number 14. However, Figure 5 illustrates a reference number 14. A description of Figure 5 begins on page 11 of Applicant's specification. Applicant has amended the specification to include that the picture signals are disclosed as picture signals "14."

In view of Applicant's amendment, it is requested that the Examiner withdraw the objection to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5).

Objection to the Specification

The Examiner has objected to the specification for the reasons set forth on page 2, paragraph 2, of the Office action. Applicant has amended the specification in view of the Examiner's comments. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Objection to the Claims

The Examiner has objected to claims 1, 3 and 4 for the reasons set forth on page 2, paragraphs 3 and 4, of the Office action. Applicant has amended these claims in view of the Examiner's comments. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to claims 1, 3 and 4 be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 1-4

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,160,545 (hereinafter Eyer). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The Examiner alleges that the region-specific interactive program guide (IPG) data of Eyer corresponds to the claimed area code of claim 1. However, this allegation is incorrect for at least the following reasons.

As acknowledged by the Examiner, the IPG (Interactive Program Guide) data contains the region-specific data (i.e., program data). (Page 3, paragraph 6, lines 11-12, citing to col. 8, lines 43-52 of Eyer).

In contradistinction, in the present invention, an area for program is distinguished from another based on "an area code" transmitted from the digital head that is separate and distinct from the "program data."

For example, Applicant discloses on page 2 of the specification, an illustrative embodiment, where an entitlement management message (EMM data) which contains an area code and a network information table (NIT) data are transmitted from the digital head and used

by the terminal to exclude a picture signal. In sum, CATV conditional access system of claim 1 does not rely on the “program data” or program guide information to recognize an area and exclude a picture signal. Rather, as recited in claim 1, the digital head end transmits both an “area code for every area and program data.” The area code and program data are separate and distinct types of data.

Accordingly, Eyer fails to teach the area code of claim 1. Indeed, the transmitting of an area code apart from the program data, as required in claim 1, is patentably distinct from the allegedly corresponding approach of Eyer. The Examiner has misinterpreted and/or misapplied the teachings of Eyer. Further, the Examiner’s interpretation of this aspect of the CATV conditional access system of claim 1 is simply incorrect and is contrary to the plain language of the above-mentioned limitation.

Since Eyer fails to teach or suggest the claimed area code, the remaining limitations of claim 1 are not taught or suggested.

For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be withdrawn. Claims 2 and 3 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

For reasons analogous to those presented above with respect to claim 1, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

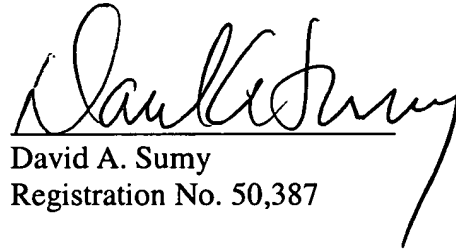
Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 09/546,191

Attorney Docket No. Q58786
Art Unit 2614

Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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WASHINGTON OFFICE



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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Date: June 24, 2003

APPENDIX
VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

The specification is changed as follows:

Paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4:

To achieve the above-explained object, according to the invention, there is provided a CATV conditional access system comprising a digital head end for transmitting picture signals of digital programs in a batch mode to terminals provided in a plurality of areas, wherein the digital head end transmits both an area code for every area and program data to the terminals employed in the plurality of areas, the area code being used to recognize such an area to which each of the terminals belongs, and digital programs of not-yet-provided services in the respective areas being indicated every area in the program data, and each of the terminals identifies the area code with the program data so as to exclude a picture signal of a digital program of a not-yet-provided service in such an area to which the terminal belongs, from the picture signals of the digital programs transmitted from the digital head end.

Paragraph bridging pages 4 and 5:

Further, according to the invention, there is provided a CATV conditional access method comprising the steps of: providing a digital head end for transmitting picture signals of digital programs to terminals provided in a plurality of areas; transmitting both an area code for every area and program data to the terminals employed in the plurality of areas, the area code being used to recognize such an area to which each of the terminals belongs, and digital programs of not-yet-provided services in the respective areas being indicated every area in the program data;

and identifying the area code with the program data so as to exclude a picture signal of a digital program of a not-yet-provided service in such an area to which the terminal belongs, from the picture signals of the digital programs transmitted from the digital head end.

Page 7, third full paragraph:

This EMM data contains an area code "a" indicative of each of related (belonging) areas. Each of the terminals may recognize ~~the~~their own related area by storing this area code "a".

Page 11, second paragraph:

In Fig. 5, the picture signals 14 of the analog picture signal series distributed from the analog head ends 1A, 1B and 1C, and further, the picture signals 14 of the digital picture signal series which are transmitted via the analog head ends 1A, 1B and 1C from the digital head end 10 are distributed from a cable 3 to a tuner 20 for program and also to another tuner 21 for data.

Page 11, fourth paragraph:

In the analog picture signal processing circuit 22A, an analog picture IF signal of the NTSC system outputted from the program tuner 20 is demodulated by an NTSC demodulator, and when the analog picture signal transmitted from the analog head end ~~44~~1A is scrambled, this scrambled analog picture signal is descrambled by way of an analog descramble circuit, and thereafter the descrambled analog picture signal is entered into a CPU/Decoder 25 provided at a post stage.

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims are amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A CATV conditional access system comprising a digital head end for transmitting picture signals of digital programs in a batch mode to terminals provided in a plurality of areas,

wherein said digital head end transmits both an area code for every area and program data to the terminals employed in the plurality of areas, said area code being used to recognize such an area to which each of the terminals belongs, and digital programs of not-yet-provided services in the respective areas being indicated for every area in said program data, and

each of the terminals identifies said area code with said program data so as to exclude a picture signal of a digital program of a not-yet-provided service in such an area to which the terminal belongs, from the picture signals of the digital programs transmitted from said digital head end.

3. (Amended) The CATV conditional access system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said terminal identifies said area code with said program data so as to exclude electronic program guide information related to the digital program of the not-yet-provided service from ~~electronic~~ electronic program guide information transmitted from said digital head end.

4. (Amended) A CATV conditional access method comprising the steps of:
providing a digital head end for transmitting picture signals of digital programs to terminals provided in a plurality of areas;

transmitting both an area code for every area and program data to the terminals employed in the plurality of areas, said area code being used to recognize such an area to which each of the

terminals belongs, and digital programs of not-yet-provided services in the respective areas being indicated for every area in said program data; and

identifying said area code with said program data so as to exclude a picture signal of a digital program of a not-yet-provided service in such an area to which the terminal belongs, from the picture signals of the digital programs transmitted from said digital head end.

Claims 5-8 are added as new claims.